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R E M A R K S

Claims 1 and 22 have been amended. Claims 2-21 stand as previously presented.

Claims 1-22 were considered in the Office Action.

5 Claims 1-22 stand provisionally rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-20 of copending Application No. 09/584,252. Claims 1-22 stand rejected 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over McNeil et al., U.S. Patent 6,167,052 (hereinafter McNeil) in view of Ahmed et al., 10 U.S. Patent 5,432,785 (hereinafter Ahmed).

Applicants acknowledge the provisional rejection under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting over claims 1-20 of copending Application No. 15 09/584,252. The rejection will be addressed when either Application No. 09/584,252 or the currently pending application have been issued.

The Applicants believe that the currently pending claims are not anticipated by or obvious over the cited references 20 and respectfully request reconsideration.

Claim 1

The cited references do not disclose or suggest:

25 "A method of securely connecting a plurality of client computers to computer resources in a shared computer system, comprising:

associating each of said plurality of client computers with at least one virtual private network connection, wherein said plurality of client computers are remotely connected to at least one virtual private 30 network termination device in said shared computer

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system, said shared computer system comprising an application service provider, and wherein said at least one virtual private network connection is established by said at least one virtual private network termination device;

5 associating said at least one virtual private network connections with a plurality of virtual local area networks; and

10 associating at least one of said computer resources in said shared computer system with each of said plurality of virtual local area networks, whereby a domain for each of said plurality of client computers is extended to include said computer resources in said application service provider and said plurality of client computer domains are isolated from each other within said application service provider."

15 (Claim 1, as amended, emphasis added)

At least the above highlighted features which differentiate embodiments of the present invention from the cited references are features that are not anticipated by the cited references and would not have been obvious to a person with ordinary skill in the art having the cited references. McNeill and Ahmed do not disclose or suggest a shared computer system, particularly an application service provider, in which the domains of multiple clients sharing resources in the application service provider are completely isolated from each other.

20 Although McNeill does disclose a plurality of VLANs (see McNeill, FIG. 2), they all appear in a single domain, the "Layer 2 Domain" shown in McNeill, FIG. 2. McNeill therefore does not disclose or suggest the claimed shared computer

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system in which multiple client domains are extended and isolated. Similarly, Ahmed does not disclose a shared computer system in which multiple client domains are extended and isolated. For example, Ahmed FIG. 4 illustrates multiple customers that share a virtual path link 58 and a broadband switching system 61, but clearly shows that the customer locations are isolated at each end of the connection, rather than extending into a shared computer system. McNeill and Ahmed are not directed at the same problem of isolating client domains from each other within a shared computer system of an application service provider. There is therefore no motivation to combine the cited references to create the claimed invention, and even if the references were combined, they still do not disclose the claimed invention.

Applicants believe that currently pending claim 1 is allowable over the cited references and respectfully request reconsideration.

Dependent claims 2-15 depend ultimately upon independent claim 1 which is allowable over the cited art as discussed above. These dependent claims are likewise in condition for allowance at least because they depend on an allowable independent claim. However, dependent claims 2-15 are independently allowable at least in that they recite particular features which, when combined with the elements of the independent claim, are also not disclosed or suggested in the cited references.

Claim 16

The cited references do not disclose or suggest:

"A secure computer system, comprising:
a plurality of computer resources;
at least one virtual local area network switch

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electrically connected to said plurality of computer resources;

at least one virtual private network termination device electrically connected to said at least one virtual local area network switch, wherein said at least one virtual local area network switch is configurable to changeably connect a plurality of virtual private network connections in said at least one virtual private network termination device to at least one of said plurality of computer resources while isolating said plurality of virtual private network connections from one another; and

a configuration engine electrically connected to said at least one virtual local area network switch, said configuration engine comprising computer readable program code for configuring said at least one virtual local area network switch to changeably connect each of said plurality of virtual private network connections to at least one of said plurality of computer resources while isolating said plurality of virtual private network connections from one another."

(Claim 16, emphasis added)

Applicants repeat the arguments for allowability set forth above with respect to claim 1, but specifically directed to the secure computer system of claim 16.

Furthermore, the cited references do not disclose a configuration engine that configures a VLAN switch to changeably connect each of a plurality of VPN connections to a plurality of computer resources while isolating the VPN connections from one another.

Dependent claims 17-21 depend ultimately upon independent claim 16 which is allowable over the cited art as discussed

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above. These dependent claims are likewise in condition for allowance at least because they depend on an allowable independent claim. However, dependent claims 17-21 are independently allowable at least in that they recite particular features which, when combined with the elements of the independent claim, are also not disclosed or suggested in the cited references.

Claim 22

The cited references do not disclose or suggest:

"A secure computer system, comprising:
a plurality of computer resources within an application service provider;
means for securely connecting each of a plurality of client computers to a portion of said plurality of computer resources in said application service provider while isolating said portion of said plurality of computer resources from a second portion of said plurality of computer resources."
(Claim 20, emphasis added)

Applicants repeat the arguments for allowability set forth above with respect to claim 1, but specifically directed to the secure computer system of claim 22. Again, the cited references do not disclose a plurality of computer resources within an application service provider, nor means for securely connecting client computers to resources in the application service provider while isolating the clients.

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The Applicants believe that the currently pending claims are allowable over the cited references and respectfully request the timely issuance of a Notice of Allowance.

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